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NOTES.

The following extracts from my diary may prove of interest in regard to the habits of the Tree Swallows:

Kingston, March 24, 1902.

Today the Pierrepont made her first trip, breaking through the ice between Kingston and Nine Mile Point with the greatest of ease. It is an unusually early opening as the ice rarely breaks up before the 9th of April, and I have seen it in the harbor as late as April 26th.

The first trip of the Pierrepont is always one of the events of the season and that must be my excuse for recording it. We have so few really great things happen that it seems a pity to miss any of them. If this fine weather holds on, and a south wind develops, we may look for Tree Swallows, early and all as it is, because there must be food for them, and the first sailings of the Pierrepont and the arrivals of the Swallows generally occur about the same date. For a few years, the name Tree Swallow seemed almost a misnomer. If we cannot say much in favor of the English Sparrow, we may at least give him the credit of causing both the Swallows and the Blue-birds to return to their original nesting places. It is now possible to find Tree Swallows nesting in hollow trees instead of bird boxes, although they seem to dearly love a hollow fence post, or a convenient cavity in a telegraph pole. I have even found this swallow breeding in a hollow in a bank, and in my collection there is a beautiful set of seven eggs taken from such a location on an island in the St. Lawrence, near Brockville. The site of the nest was quite as remarkable as the number of eggs found. In the apple trees in the very old orchard at New Court, the Tree Swallows breed pretty regularly.

March 28th, 1902.

After all there is some satisfaction in being able to say, "I told you so." That is my position in the present instance, and who can blame me if I swell with pride when turning back to the swallow notes made on the 24th. Everything happened just as expected; there was food for the birds, the wind veered to the south and the Swallows came here in numbers to-day. It is one of the earliest arrivals I have ever known.

April 15th, 1902.

Yesterday a fine south wind blew and swallows came up with it in large numbers. They were very tired and little inclined to fly, but sat about on the telegraph wires. Those reported earlier did not remain, the cool weather, no doubt, forcing a retreat.

Last year the swallows came long before the usual date, and as this spring was even earlier it seemed as if they should have beaten the record, but I could not place them until to-day—a time they should not have appeared, if my theories are correct. The

wind was in the north, a mild relapse into winter was being experienced and yet four Tree Swallows were flitting over the Bath Road Creek—two more were seen further on. I strongly suspect they have been here for several days and are hoping for better things in the way of weather.

April 23rd, 1903.

The weather has been very cold and discouraging to bird life in general, the wind ordinarily in the north and frost nearly every night; frost severe enough to make a quarter of an inch of ice on the pools. In spite of it all Shrikes, Robins, and Horned Larks have built their nests and laid their eggs, and on Tuesday I saw a Tree Swallow invading a post hole as if it had affairs of state on hand. The swallows must have had a hard time finding insect food, but as the Barn Swallows and Purple Martins have arrived, flies must exist in sufficient numbers to support them. On Tuesday some thousands of Tree Swallows were circling in a sheltered spot in the rear of the Institution. It was a most interesting sight, as the winged insects evidently flew within a circumscribed space, not more than eighty yards in length, and this kept an immense body of Swallows in close quarters. One solitary Barn Swallow gave quality and tone to the assemblage.

March 26th, 1904.

Although this is one of the latest seasons recorded, the Tree Swallows are here in numbers. On March 24 I thought I saw one, but it seemed too good to be true; to-day they are everywhere and, as usual, on their arrival, tired out.

The foregoing notes would lead one to suspect that the Tree Swallows frequently arrived at a very early date. A few years ago, I kept in touch with several observers of the early arrival of Swallows in the western part of Ontario, and it seemed about an invariable rule that they reached there a day ahead of their coming here. The average date was about April 8th, but of late years they seem to be putting in an appearance earlier.

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